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General Assembly

Seventy-first session

Official Records

12th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 21 September 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Thomson ..... (Fiji)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Nalbandian (Armenia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Address by Ms. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President of the Republic of Croatia

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Croatia.

Ms. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President of the Republic of Croatia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency Ms. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President of the Republic of Croatia, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Grabar-Kitarović: "We want a future in which everyone lives a happy life and loves one another". Those words were recently written in the *Book of Ideas* by a six-year-old boy named Lovro when he visited my office along with a number of other children to mark the beginning of the new school year in Croatia. But they could easily have been written by any child in the world. It is a simple, yet powerful, wish. In order to transform our world, we as leaders must listen to Lovro's words. And for that reason I want his voice to be heard today in the General Assembly. Everyone can agree that those simple truths, among which are the right to a happy life and the freedom of choice, as universal drivers of a better world, are indeed the ultimate objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A year has passed since we adopted the milestone Agenda 2030, and we are now one step and one year closer to its deadline. Today, in terms of achievements and responsibilities, I would like to address sustainable development by focusing on human potential, natural resources and resilient societies.

We have all signed onto the Agenda, our plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. People should be at the heart of our efforts, with youth at the very core. Our goal as leaders is to empower our youth through education and give them opportunities to be the catalysts of transformation and progress. Now is the time to start viewing our youth as the guardians of Agenda 2030, because in 14 years whatever progress we have achieved will be theirs to carry on.

I would agree with many who argue that even today, in 2016, we must decide whether we opt for open or closed societies. Whatever we do to safeguard the future should be done with determination, with clear choices in mind.

There is much work to be done. We must begin by restoring public confidence in Governments and international organizations. We must embrace our common values with strength, courage and true conviction — beginning with tolerance — and become active and dedicated builders of a world where there is no room for despair.

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True inclusiveness means more than just being open to cooperation and raising awareness from time to time. It should be a continuous search for consensus, nationally and internationally, and the active involvement of all stakeholders in building new strategic alliances. There is an evident need for ending the prevailing silo approach, if we are to achieve synergies when implementing mutually interdependent goals. Security, prosperity and human rights go hand-in-hand and cannot be separated.

According to the latest UNICEF statistics, over 50 million children are currently uprooted, and almost 60 million children do not have access to primary education. Those children are counting on us to give them the chance they deserve. We should not act only when moved by images, such as those of the Syrian boys Aylan and Omran, which are true symbols of our world gone horribly wrong.

The optimism and resilience shown by children and, most of all, their unbridled honesty are qualities that I respect and admire. All children should have the right to their childhood and education. It is devastating to know how many children could not begin class this autumn because they are victims of the various global crises that we allow to persist.

In terms of unlocking global human potential, I believe that if we want to give future generations a chance for a better life by 2030, we must address three main, mutually reinforcing, phenomena: large-scale migrations, demographic dynamics and youth unemployment. We need a predictable, humane, responsible and legally sound system of governing international migration. Croatia commends the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (resolution 71/1), which the General Assembly adopted on Monday, as well as the Agenda for Humanity presented at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul last May. Implementing them together with Agenda 2030 will help us address the root causes of the large movements of people. On that issue we need not minimize anyone's dignity or rights, nor underestimate the perils that surround them.

Our immediate focus should be two-fold. We must provide assistance to both the countries of origin and the receiving countries in order to promote safe, regular and orderly migration management. We must promote global efforts to counter organized-crime networks involved in human trafficking. What we have is a global crisis of human mobility and, as such, it requires a global response.

We must end the policy of double standards and the hypocritical approach to the tragedy that is unfolding as we speak. We must help those who have managed to leave the fields of destruction, but we must also do our utmost to assist those who have stayed behind and are left with no means of or strength to escape.

All societies, developed and underdeveloped alike, are currently facing not only one generation, but several generations, of youth that are unemployed, disappointed and discouraged, while others are trying to escape from conflict, violence and intolerance. They are extremely sceptical about their future and become easy prey for all kinds of manipulation and radicalization.

Social media and modern communications technology are becoming a double-edged sword. They provide us with unparalleled opportunities, making the world interconnected in ways that only yesterday few dared to dream of. At the same time, they carry the dark potential to spread hatred and intolerance and build invisible walls around those who look or think differently. We must pay special attention to that possibility and find the prudence to use new technologies to improve not only our daily lives, but also our hearts and minds.

Education, knowledge and tolerance are more than just the tools of choice when dealing with political and social discrimination, exclusion and the prevention of violent extremism and terrorism. They are the way forward. They are the key to success and are fundamental drivers of sustainable development.

Constant investment in education systems always pays back with big dividends. Ever more countries are recognizing the necessity of a comprehensive education reform, because too many current education systems are generating youth who cannot find employment. Education has the power to multiply opportunities. It is an engine that creates choices, providing every individual with the freedom to choose a path of his or her own.

Gender inequality is the most pervasive form of global inequality and a pressing human rights concern. Women and girls continue to be exposed to a range of obstacles to their complete and full inclusion in social, economic and political life. There will be no real progress without a gender-responsive implementation

of Agenda 2030. For us to succeed we need more women in politics and business, in diplomacy and on executive boards. But that will not happen without men. Their role in the empowerment of women, their support and understanding, are as crucial as the will of women to succeed.

This year, Croatia is chairing the Equal Futures Partnership — an innovative multilateral initiative aimed at encouraging Member States to empower women economically and politically. The high-level meeting of its members and supporters will take place tomorrow. I invite all those present to find the time to pay due attention to that endeavour.

Nature is just as irreplaceable as people are. Development strategies must seriously take into account our natural resources as the fundamental starting point. Climate change is a powerful weapon of mass destruction that is going out of control. We have very little time to reverse that self-destructive course. Climate change is also a risk multiplier for other security challenges, including large-scale migrations and regional instability born out of hopelessness and desolation. We must ensure climate action and make sure that the recent Paris Agreement enters into force as soon as possible.

As a country on the northern shores of the Mediterranean, Croatia is following the developments across that cradle of our civilization with care and deep concern. The southern Mediterranean has, sadly, become a sea of dangerous journeys, where the legendary tales of the classical world are being replaced by new stories of human suffering, where ancient monuments are being reduced to dust and where indifference to human life sometimes reaches an unimaginable scale. The stability, security and well-being of the Mediterranean remain a priority of Croatian foreign policy.

Our societies are exposed to a complex global security environment with increased mutual dependencies. There is a whole range of hybrid threats to national and international security: violent extremism, terrorism, foreign terrorist fighters, uncontrolled migration, organized crime, risks related to the cyberenvironment, and the malicious use of new technologies. Large-scale migrations and unemployment are interconnected, just as failed States and fragile Governments are related to conflict.

Terrorism continues to represent not only a security concern, but also a detrimental economic factor for every country, causing millions of people to leave their homes in search of safety and prosperity. We need to strengthen the resilience of our societies at the grass-roots level, particularly the fabric of multicultural and multi-confessional societies, against terrorist propaganda, attempts at violent radicalization and other extremist actions. In addition to our efforts to promote sustainable and long-term de-radicalization and fight terrorist narratives, especially those in cyberspace, we need to address the underlying socioeconomic drivers of terrorism, such as poverty, inequality, unemployment, the lack of education and the lack of economic prosperity.

When countering global threats that impede the emergence and growth of resilient societies, the issue of disarmament must remain at the forefront. Recently, we achieved success in the development and implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. At the same time, large parts of the United Nations disarmament machinery are stalled. The 2015 Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains a case in point. In our quest for a more secure global community, we must spare no effort in the field of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Twenty years have passed since the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was opened for signature, but we still need to invigorate our determination to become a nuclear-test-free world. New technologies and the fourth industrial revolution are changing our lives for the better in more ways than one. However, they also have a negative impact on security and disarmament. Technologies such as 3-D printing are changing the algorithm in the area of conventional weapons, and the misuse of cyberspace might have unforeseen consequences in the chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear areas. We must therefore broaden our reach when it comes to disarmament topics and align it with new realities.

Croatia considers participation in international missions and operations to be a principal duty that can contribute to peace. In that regard, we are preparing to place the Croatian Army Engineering Horizontal Construction Company at the disposal of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Today, on the International Day of Peace, it is necessary to emphasize that women are powerful

agents of peace and security. We must not treat women only as victims of conflict and violence. Women are powerful agents of change. Their growing contribution to the prevention and resolution of conflict, as well as to the maintenance of a sustainable and inclusive peace, should be encouraged. More female peacekeepers could help us combat sexual violence, promote gender awareness among the host nations' populations and improve relationships with local citizens. In order to contribute to that goal, Croatia is conducting a United Nations training course for women police officers from Asia, Africa and Europe. The course is organized back-to-back with predeployment military training in order to enhance the synergy between the military and civilian sectors by integrating the gender and multicultural aspects of peacekeeping.

We commend the Secretary-General for advancing the responsibility to protect. Over the past 10 years, a lot has been accomplished in building consensus around that concept and strengthening the will and capacity for its implementation. Croatia advocates the further strengthening of the role of the International Criminal Court so that it can assume greater responsibility in prosecuting mass atrocities and war crimes, including criminal acts against cultural heritage committed by State or non-State actors. We believe that it is of paramount importance to put an end to the culture of impunity. And that must be done without any politicization, without putting daily politics above the rule of law and, certainly, without rewriting or misinterpreting history.

It is through hard-earned wisdom that we lave learned that there can be no true justice without peace or peace without justice. Establishing individual accountability through strong evidential and legal norms is essential. International tribunals and judicial mechanisms can lay the foundations needed to make the voices of victims heard and to record volumes of evidence in the annals of history, but it is up to each society to bring the process of reconciliation to its end.

Respect for, and the protection of, human rights is a prerequisite for sustainable peace and development. Our work in that area should never end. We strongly support and advocate the Human Rights Up Front initiative. Through its candidacy for membership in the Human Rights Council for the period 2017-2019, Croatia looks forward to constructively contributing to and strengthening the Council's work in the promotion, protection and further development of human rights.

Croatia will continue to be actively engaged in the United Nations reform process. We commend recent progress in the process of electing the next Secretary-General and strengthening the Office of the President of the General Assembly. However, the Organization is still lagging behind in terms of what is expected concerning Security Council reform, as highlighted by the number of ongoing, prolonged and nascent crises in the world. We have great expectations for the next Secretary-General. We hope that she or he will give bold impetus to the processes of carrying forward our Organization, making it even more effective, accountable, transparent and, above all, more relevant.

The world has been yearning for inspirational and effective leadership. The solidarity of our global society is deteriorating as problems pile up and hope diminishes. Will we accept that we are creating a world led by feelings of separation, fear and cynicism because we have allowed violence, injustice and crises to prevail? Or will we reverse those trends and choose to achieve a better tomorrow?

Fourteen years from now, our children will not ask us what we planned together or what we signed up to do. Instead, they will ask us what we achieved together and whether we made a difference. And we as leaders need therefore to inspire our citizens again and act together today.

I want to end with a message to all of the children in Croatia and in the world: their voices provide us with guidance and serve as an obligation for all of us who gather here at this permanent meeting point of humankind. Lovro may only be 6 years old, but his voice resonates today in the General Assembly Hall, and he is making a difference.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Croatia for the statement she has just made.

Ms. Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović, President of the Republic of Croatia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Medina Sánchez, President of the Dominican Republic

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Dominican Republic.

Mr. Danilo Medina Sánchez, President of the Dominican Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome His Excellency Mr. Danilo Medina Sánchez, President of the Dominican Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Medina Sánchez (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour to participate once again in the General Assembly on behalf of the people of the Dominican Republic. I wish to begin my remarks with a special recognition of the work of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. We appreciate his dedication in the search for solutions to the conflicts that have shaken the world over the past 10 years, and we wish him the best of luck in the new tasks that he will undertake.

The year 2016 is proving to be especially turbulent, with territorial conflicts and open identity-related tensions in various parts of the world. We hope and insist, of course, that the international community will find a peaceful outcome to those conflicts — first and foremost for the sake of the millions of lives that are affected by them. Sometimes the urgency inherent in those tragedies weakens our commitment to address problems that appear to be less pressing but are the most important in the long term.

One such issue, with perhaps the largest scope and greatest potential for long-term transformation, is the fight against poverty and inequality. Over the past two decades, the rapid economic growth brought about by economic globalization has fuelled high expectations in the countries of the South. In fact, it was believed that the prosperity enjoyed by a few countries might finally be within everyone's reach. It should be recognized that those hopes were not unfounded. Indeed, over the course of those two decades, hundreds of millions of people were lifted out of poverty.

But we cannot let ourselves be carried away by excessive optimism. We have an obligation to clarify the scope of those gains in the light of the actual data. We must also expand our horizons to observe those places and areas where globalization has not kept the promises made to humankind.

To begin with, we must remember that all of the hundreds of millions of people who were recently lifted out of poverty did not automatically become part of the middle class, nor did all who were able to do so necessarily remain there. We have, then, a new social segment, a segment that has already been lifted out of poverty, but whose position is much too fragile for us to consider it definitive. The word used to describe the situation of those men and women is "vulnerability" — vulnerability to unemployment, to the illness of a family member, to an economic crisis or a natural disaster, and vulnerability to a series of unforeseen events that could ruin their prospects for the future and return them to poverty in just a short time.

That vulnerable group now includes more than 1.5 billion people around the world, who represent more than 22 per cent of the world's population, according to United Nations statistics. That population is especially large in Latin America and the Caribbean, where the majority of people earn between $4 and $10 a day. The challenge that we face is to strengthen the position of that emerging class. We must provide them with security and give them the tools and skills enabling them not only to develop their own lives, but also to participate in the development of their countries.

Let there be no doubt that new social class offers a great opportunity for our nations. Because of its expanded capacity for consumption and its ability to save, that social class has the potential to become, as has already been noted, an economic growth bonus, similar to the so-called demographic boom that our countries have seen as well. To bolster the emerging middle class will require more complex and better-quality products in all sectors, from infrastructure to education. The path of that class to progress will enable our countries and the entire world to progress.

But in order to realize all of that potential, we must strengthen the safety nets and social supports in the areas of health, education, employment and social security, so as to keep vulnerable individuals from falling back into poverty. If we take that opportunity, not only can those men and women leave their difficulties behind forever, but they can also convert their countries into middle class, democratic and peaceful societies with less need to emigrate abroad. In other words, they can be the key to far-reaching changes on our continent.

Within the framework of the Assembly, the post-2015 development agenda, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its Sustainable Development Goals, provides a good road map for many of the challenges that we face in Latin America, the Caribbean and the world. Our country believes that it is important to work

every day to reduce suffering and to develop strategies to ensure that the path out of poverty is a path of no return. However, in order to accomplish those goals, in order to lift people out of poverty — hundreds of millions of people — more is needed than merely adopting a series of formulas and indicators.

Profound changes must urgently be made to the methods by which trade and financial flows are carried out. That is to say, it is necessary to revise the rules of the game between rich countries and poor countries. We are talking about trade. We live in an age of unprecedented trade openness. My country, the Dominican Republic, like many others, has signed free trade agreements with the major economic blocs, which ought to be mutually beneficial — and in many cases they are. However, if I may say so in all honesty, there are times when the developed countries engage in hypocrisy. After more than half a century in which those countries were protected from everything that other countries were able to produce better, now those countries refuse to reduce protectionism within their borders, whereas under the free trade agreements they require that from their counterparts in developing countries. They want us, the developing countries, to eliminate our protections on industrial goods, but they do not eliminate agricultural subsidies.

For the next five years, for example, the United States will provide an average of $97.8 billion annually to support its agricultural sector, and in its multi-year subsidy policy for the period 2014-2020, the European Union will devote €408 billion to subsidize its agricultural sector. The agricultural protectionism practised by rich countries allows them to influence the market in their favour, while tariffs and trade barriers routinely exclude products from developing countries.

In addition, other non-tariff barriers, such as phytosanitary regulations, are not transparent; they also create additional barriers to farmers in developing countries seeking to enter the global market. The developed countries have allowed those market distortions to persist and have continued to make rhetorical statements in favour of free trade. They should, rather, take concrete steps to attain the ideal of genuine free and fair trade.

Recently, countries such as ours that have signed on to free trade agreements have been forced to revise the terms of our existing agreements because of such protectionist practices that create situations of unequal competition. If the industrialized countries want to be true to their word, they must agree to significantly reduce their protectionism and their subsidies during current trade negotiations and, at the same time, ensure increased funding for rural development.

Just as we should seek greater fairness in trade, we must also ensure that financial flows serve as partners of development and productivity. For some time now, we have been living in an economy where the financial sector is becoming increasingly important. That is a reality that brings as many opportunities as dangers. We were all able to see, for example, how a purely financial crisis like the one that broke out in the 2008, following the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers, was able to jeopardize years or decades of development efforts in many of our countries.

We have also had the opportunity to confirm how the free movement of capital can be used for the purposes of tax evasion or money-laundering. The Dominican Republic, like many of the countries present in the Assembly today, can only benefit from more stable, predictable and better regulated financial markets. Therefore, this year, we have begun to adopt the anti-money laundering recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America. Those measures include greater supervision of financial institutions, greater transparency of the legal status of persons, ensuring the legitimate ownership of assets, monitoring wire transfers, documenting retention policies, creating a framework for international cooperation and providing mutual legal assistance, among other measures, for making the Dominican banking system safer and more transparent.

It is worth noting that news such as the recent European Union ruling ordering the technology company Apple to pay €13 billion in unpaid taxes plainly demonstrates a reality that we have long known, namely, that tax havens do not necessarily exist only in sunny Caribbean countries. Quite the contrary, the great majority are under the jurisdiction of the richest countries. Moreover, contrary to the widespread idea that tax havens are merely places to conceal money, they are primarily platforms from which to conduct financial and trade operations in global capital markets. That is to say, it is not money stowed under the mattress but rather an integral part of the real economy that siphons resources from it and robs States of their prerogative of fiscal sovereignty.

The lack of regulation has paved the way for tax evaders and has made the work of tax authorities more complex. It constitutes a major threat to State funding worldwide, which undermines the ability of Governments to meet their enormous responsibilities to their citizens. We therefore applaud any initiatives that promote greater regulation of tax havens. We also know that the regulation of tax havens must be part and parcel of a larger system of effective public regulation and monitoring of financial markets, so that they can serve the real economy and its citizens.

It is our responsibility to continue to try to lift millions of people out of poverty, but we must do so by setting education, health, employment and social-security policies that build on past successes and enable us to forge ahead. We will continue to be committed to the global exchange of goods and services, but let us ensure that those exchanges are fair and on a level playing field. We will open the floodgates of investment, thereby multiplying possibilities for production, research and growth, but let us also ensure fairness and transparency so that, in the medium and long term, our investment and growth will be in the service of the vast majority rather than a select few.

Let us build the necessary consensus to humanize the global economy. Let us bring the openness that we demand in finance to the regulation of migration flows. Let us use the same creativity and enthusiasm that we bring to launching lucrative businesses to finding solutions for those most in need. The millions of people who have recently emerged from poverty are the best proof that great things can be achieved when there is political will. Those millions of men and women are also our best partners and the primary reason to continue our work. We have made great strides, but there is a long road ahead of us. The steps ahead will require boldness and honesty. We must do away with taboos, rethink paradigms and redefine the rules of the game. Our country is committed to substantially reducing inequalities, but not only between the richest and poorest inhabitants of our countries, but also in reshaping the international relations between poor and rich countries.

Let us sit together for a dialogue based on mutual respect, equality and for the common good, without any privileges. Let us do so convinced that that is the only way that humankind can prevail. The time of zero-sum games is over. It is time for all of us to add value. It is time to form alliances that seek to build and where all allies are equal. The international community can always count on the Dominican Republic to help along that path and to work in the service of the vast majority, who needs us.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Dominican Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Danilo Medina Sánchez, President of the Dominican Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Maithripala Sirisena, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Maithripala Sirisena, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Maithripala Sirisena, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Sirisena (*spoke in Sinhalese; English text provided by the delegation*): I am extremely happy to take part in the seventy-first session of the General Assembly as the President of Sri Lanka.

I would like to convey the current situation in my country. For the past 20 months, my leadership has helped usher in a new era of social, political and economic transformations in my country. Before I came to power, people in my country were living in fear and suspicion. I have laid the foundation for strengthening the rule of law and restoring democratic rights for the people of Sri Lanka so that they can live happily in a free and democratic society. My Government seeks to make the people of Sri Lanka among the happiest people on Earth. To that end, we have taken steps to strengthen freedom and democracy while achieving economic prosperity. The Government is committed to making the people of Sri Lanka a developed nation.

Poverty is a global challenge. I am determined to alleviate poverty in my country. I have therefore declared 2017 to be the Year of Eliminating Poverty in Sri Lanka. I have developed a basic platform to help

people emerge from poverty in a country that prioritizes economic progress. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development serves as the guiding principles for all nations and institutions, led by the United Nations, to bring about the economic, social and environmental transformations that will make the world a better place. In that regard, we recognize that economic development plays a key role, and that environmental sustainability, particularly the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, will remain a main pillar in our endeavour to bring about the necessary changes in my country. With the educated younger generations in mind, Sri Lanka's national development strategy will give prominence to building a green and innovation-based economy through progressive reforms and planning.

As an island nation, Sri Lanka wishes to make maximum use of its ocean resources, with a new emphasis on ocean research, tourism, fisheries and marine resources. The Government seeks to further improve the free health-care and education systems, while providing greater technology to agriculture and domestic industry, so as to ensure that our people live better lives.

In many parts of the world, we see the unfortunate proliferation of anger, hatred, brutality and conflict. I would say that contemporary society is experiencing a crisis of morality. I believe that all States should heed the cry for moral values and that every society must dedicate itself to raising the level of positive moral values.

Sri Lanka is a Buddhist country where Theravada Buddhism is practiced. The teachings of the Buddha help us find solutions to many of the burning issues of the contemporary world. Similarly, I am sure that the wisdom offered by the great world religions — such as Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and others — can help us today. I am therefore of the view that we as States must strengthen and foster those religions and philosophies that help us look inward.

I take this opportunity to draw the attention of this gathering to a significant obstacle in our progress as the world community, that is, the menace of drugs and intoxicants that has beset society, including youth and schoolchildren. As the President of Brazil pointed out (see A/71/PV.8), illicit drugs have become the most serious challenge faced by society today. While endorsing his ideas, I would urge the world community, the United Nations and all States to commit to fighting illegal drugs collectively and individually through a robust international programme that is more organized and stronger than the one currently in place.

On the domestic front, my Government has taken effective measures to strengthen democracy, the rule of law and good governance, paving the way for positive change to ensure that war will never again take place on the soil of my country, Sri Lanka. The reconciliation process under way today has taken lessons learned from the bitter experience of a brutal war that lasted three decades. The process will ensure that my country will never again see the cruelty of war or terrorism and that all communities will live peacefully in a rational and a free-thinking Sri Lanka. For that noble purpose, Sri Lanka welcomes the collaboration and blessings that it has received from international organizations and the international community.

Sri Lanka is a free, independent nation, and I intend to preserve and protect its sovereignty and territorial integrity, in line with the policies of all of the other nations gathered here today. As such, my country will seek its own recipe for the reconciliation process and the necessary transformation and reform efforts, based on respect for the essential indigenous thinking of the local people. Sri Lanka will adhere to a social democratic policy and work closely with the international community towards prosperity and wisdom, in line with the rest of the world.

Following the war that traumatized the nation for three decades, we have started the journey towards national reconciliation and lasting peace. However, we will not hurry; rather, we will tread each step with care, vigilance, patience and persistence. My beloved Sri Lanka has big dreams. I look forward to the blessings and collaboration of Member States to achieve them.

I thank the United Nations and its agencies for the ongoing support provided to Sri Lanka. I am honoured to mention the contributions made by the outgoing Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, in fostering international development and strengthening democracy and human rights. Those efforts are a blessing to humankind.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize my commitment to empowering our youth with the best knowledge in the world. We are also embarking upon a reconciliation programme, with a view to Sri Lanka becoming an exemplary democracy in the world. My Government will fulfil its responsibilities towards its people, and

I seek Member States' assistance and blessings in that noble endeavour.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Maithripala Sirisena, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Peter M. Christian, President and Head of Government of the Federated States of Micronesia

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President and Head of Government of the Federated States of Micronesia.

Mr. Peter M. Christian, President and Head of Government of the Federated States of Micronesia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Peter M. Christian, President and Head of Government of the Federated States of Micronesia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Christian: As Mr. Peter Thomson of Fiji assumes the presidency of the General Assembly at its seventy-first session, I wish to recognize that historic occasion for Pacific islanders, and express my congratulations to him and his country. I would also like to thank outgoing President Mogens Lykketoft for his leadership during the General Assembly at its seventieth session, during which I made my first appearance here at the United Nations. At that time, I said that holding on to the podium gave me a sense of security and hope that all of us were thinking in the same direction (see A/70/PV.22).

After 10 years of service, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon deserves great praise for his effective leadership, during which he championed many issues important to small island developing States, including generating the political momentum needed to address climate change and his push to catalyse the initial capitalization of the Green Climate Fund. Sadly, the funds, generously contributed, have been slow in flowing to needy States, thereby contributing to painful delays in the implementation of mitigation and adaptation projects.

The Federated States of Micronesia today celebrates its twenty-fifth year of membership in the Organization. At the time we joined, following the end of the Cold War, there was a great sense of optimism that the long-standing obstacles to world peace and progress had been relegated to the past. Today, while there has been progress towards the great goals of the Organization, it must be said without hesitation that much remains to be done.

The reform of our United Nations, most important that of the Security Council, has remained on the agenda now for a quarter of a century, which evokes characteristics of an era that needs forgetting. Twenty-five years ago, the small island developing States cried out for action against human-induced climate change, while stressing that we literally faced extinction as nations and as oceanic cultures, owing to surging sea levels and the related consequences. I must concede that our voices have not been entirely unheard. We stand today, at last, many nations united to confront this dark, glaring reality. However, even in the relatively short span of 25 years the relentless advance of climate change has outpaced our efforts to deal with it — so that today, while all countries must consider themselves vulnerable, the small island developing States are dealing with an already clear and present danger — the adverse impact of climate change.

Over the years of my country's membership in this union of hope, we have observed what I would refer to as glacial progress, were it not for the fact that the glaciers themselves are now melting. Nevertheless, we, along with everyone in this Hall, must remain committed to the great mandates that we so boldly assigned ourselves: the eradication of poverty, the advancement of international peace and security, universal adherence to human rights principles, the protection of our oceans and their resources, and better stewardship of our entire planet.

The list goes on, and it is familiar to all of us. We read it out each year at the general debate and in conference halls around the world. Yet, despite our proclamations and declarations, we seem to be pivoting not too far from where we started. Our peoples look to us for progress beyond repetitive words.

On the issue of international refugees, Pacific Islanders live in a zone that emanates peace, and it

pains us that the global menace of terrorism continues to spread worldwide. It seems that we are helpless to stop the tide of fear and violence — fear that affects millions of innocent civilians, mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, to the point that they must suppress their human dignity and knock on a stranger's door to seek shelter from the turmoil of war. The question is, will we answer?

As small island countries in the Pacific and as members of this family of nations, we plead with the Security Council to take greater action and respond to that global crisis, if not for the mothers and fathers, then at least for the children, whose innocence allows them to play between tents and be happy at the sight of strange food in a bowl.

We would like to know what is happening with the ceasefire in Syria. Even from the Pacific, we have an interest in that question. What are the United States and Russia doing about it? What is Syria doing about it? We know they have the power to do more, and we ask them to please do so.

On the issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which is part of the Asia-Pacific region, the Federated States of Micronesia is concerned about the peace and long-term stability of the region. Together with other nations, the Federated States of Micronesia condemns the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's ongoing provocative actions and rhetoric. Unchecked, the Pacific Ocean, the same ocean that we speak of saving for all our sakes, may become a battleground. One truly wonders why Beijing and Moscow seem unconcerned that a missile could stray their way. I ask them to please intercede on behalf of all of us. On that note, the people of Micronesia look forward to the day when nuclear weapons will become a thing of the past, remembered only with great disdain and regret.

On the issue of Security Council reform, I have heard the phrase "fit for purpose" often used at the United Nations. We continue to see the need for a reformed United Nations that is not only fit for purpose, but also dynamic, changing its modus operandi to keep in step with changing world circumstances, accepting new methods like Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's example of a smartphone on the first day of the general debate (see A/71/PV.8), and needing to move in pace with changes. The United Nations must be able to focus on preventive diplomacy around the world and not be limited to dealing with hot spots. I totally agree with that position. And yes, the United Nations must be a catalyst for peace — a peacekeeper, more than a peacemaker. The Security Council, entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, must adapt to modern times and reflect contemporary geopolitical realities. However, as an arm of the United Nations, the Council can be credible and effective only if properly empowered and adequately supported by Member States. In that regard, the Federated States of Micronesia reiterates its support for the Group of Four countries being made permanent members of the Council.

It is interesting how we stand at this rostrum and talk about disabilities. In that regard, I have noticed that many of us leaders who come up here to speak also seem to have disabilities. We are colour-blind, unable to see the difference between green and red. I apologize for that, and I will try to be brief.

The Group of Asia and the Pacific Small Island Developing States has long advocated for climate and security to become a regular focus of the Security Council. The Group also submitted a proposal on the subject to the World Humanitarian Summit, calling for a special representative in the United Nations system to be dedicated to the issue of climate and security. Momentum appears to be on our side, and we hope that the Secretary-General, while he is still with us, will appoint such a special representative, adding to his legacy as a champion of climate change.

The selection of a new Secretary-General should involve the whole membership. That would help to ensure that the new head of the Organization has the political support of all Members and is responsive, responsible and effective on behalf of all, not just select, elite, nations.

On sustainable development, the work of the United Nations rests on three pillars: peace and security, development and human rights. This is the first year of implementation after the international community adopted a number of milestone agreements in 2015 — on disaster-risk reduction, financing for development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

From the High-level Political Forum exercise held in July, we learned that integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into our national plans will be daunting, and that a one-size-fits-all approach will not work. Presenting a true picture of our national

circumstances should not be a burden on small island developing States. In addition, the United Nations should consider the statistics for countries with fewer than 100,000 people, so as to ensure an inclusive process and so that truly no one is left behind. Many of the challenges before the United Nations can be addressed only through the collective work of its membership. Support and partnerships are recognized as essential to making the SDGs universal and transformative for lives on the ground, and national ownership is critical.

On the issue of fisheries and oceans, while we may be known as Pacific small island developing States here at the United Nations, there is another term that we often use, which is "big ocean States". The Federated States of Micronesia alone has 607 islands, spread across 3 million square kilometres of the Pacific. We are custodians of some of the world's richest biodiversity and marine resources, and have pledged to conserve 30 per cent of our near-shore marine areas under the Micronesia Challenge, a regional effort to preserve the natural resources that are crucial to the survival of Pacific traditions, cultures and livelihoods. Our conservation efforts directly benefit my country's sustainable use of its ocean fisheries.

Speaking of cultural preservation, I would like to thank UNESCO for its recent designation of our ancient ruins of Nan Madol as a UNESCO World Heritage site, a feat of construction that truly matches, if not surpasses, the wonders of the Egyptian Pyramids. As for climate change, the United Nations remains the last and best hope for galvanizing the necessary political will and commitment for advancing our global agenda on climate change. From this rostrum and elsewhere, leaders from small island developing States, like many others, have called upon the States Members of our Organization, especially world leaders, to step up and take charge by calling for the urgently needed mitigation and financing initiatives to implement climate-change agreements.

Current Government commitments fall considerably short of even reaching the 2°C goal that we agreed to in Paris. The recent ratification of the Paris Agreement by more than 30 countries, including virtually all Pacific island countries, raises our hopes and expectations that others will soon follow suit.

On the issue of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, standing here one year ago, I described the Federated States of Micronesia's long-standing efforts to amend the Protocol to phase down hydrofluorocarbon (HFC) use, and I thanked new supporters and noted that the proposals were finally bearing fruit (see A/70/PV.22). HFCs are the fastest-growing greenhouse gases in the world. They are also extremely potent, producing warming effects hundreds to thousands of times greater than those of carbon dioxide per ton. Phasing down HFCs will help prevent warming emissions equivalent to almost 100 billion tons of carbon dioxide by 2050. Thanks to the many countries that have supported the phase-out proposal, as set forth in the Montreal Protocol, that crusade has gained new momentum.

Like others, I welcome the progress in the diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba. My country, too, has established diplomatic relations with Cuba, but even if we had not entered into that relationship for sovereign recognition and partnership, we, the Federated States of Micronesia, a State Member of the United Nations, would still lend our strong support to resolution 70/120. We ask the United States to accelerate its consideration of and process towards lifting the embargo imposed on Cuba. Along the same lines, I applaud the peace accord reached among the people of Colombia. There may be sceptics as to the truce's viability, but let us give peace a chance by applauding the great effort and praying for its success. ¡Viva Colombia!

Every year, before coming to the General Assembly, the Pacific Islands Forum meets to review and recommend our positions on issues worthy of bringing before the Assembly. Earlier this month, Heads of State and Government convened for the forty-seventh annual meeting of the Forum in Micronesia. At that meeting, French Polynesia and New Caledonia were seated as full members of the Forum, while the Federated States of Micronesia became a member of the small island States. Climate change, oceans, health and human rights and partnership featured prominently on our agenda. On climate change, the Forum reaffirmed its position that achieving the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting the average global temperature increase to 1.5°C degrees above pre-industrial levels is an existential matter for many Forum members, and that it must be addressed with paramount urgency. The Forum also observed that the Paris Agreement must be brought into force before the end of 2016, or as soon as possible, even tomorrow.

On oceans, the Forum reaffirmed that the Pacific region's most important natural resource is our ocean.

To that end, the Forum leaders endorsed the Pohnpei Oceans Statement: A Course to Sustainability. In the Statement, the Forum reaffirmed that the ocean is the basis for the livelihoods of Pacific peoples, and further noted the valuable opportunity presented by the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. The Statement further urges the timely and comprehensive conclusion of the Preparatory Committee process, established to make substantive recommendations to the General Assembly on the elements of a draft text of an international, legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

On fisheries, the Forum called for action to end illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and associated activities, including high-seas bunkering, human trafficking, and illicit trade. The Forum further urged flag States to exercise more diligent efforts in carrying out their flag-State responsibilities and maintaining control of their nationals.

Our faith in the Organization rests not on the hope that its goals can be reached within a certain time frame, whether it be 25 years or 71 years. Rather, it rests on our confidence that nothing is impossible among like-minded nations willing to unite in sustained efforts. In that regard, this Organization, the greatest convocation ever devised by man, will continue to light our way and that of future generations.

I will end my remarks with a quotation. Right after the First World War, President Wilson wanted to see the creation of an organization that would prevent all future wars. In that regard, he said,

> "A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small States alike."

An evident principle ran through the whole programme, namely, the principle of justice for all peoples and nationalities and their right to live on equal terms of liberty and safety with one another — whether they be strong or weak.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Federated States of Micronesia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Peter M. Christian, President of the Federated States of Micronesia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Raimonds Vējonis, President of the Republic of Latvia

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Latvia.

Mr. Raimonds Vējonis, President of the Republic of Latvia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Raimonds Vējonis, President of the Republic of Latvia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Vējonis: This year marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of Latvia's independence and membership in the United Nations. My country took its rightful place at the United Nations in 1991, with the clear objective of making a contribution to the collective security, stability and prosperity of the world. As a responsible democratic State based on the rule of law and respect for human dignity and freedom, Latvia remains strongly committed to the essential work of the United Nations.

The United Nations has been, and will be, our platform for global engagement. The far-reaching agreements on sustainable development and climate change have restored trust in the multilateral system's ability to deliver solutions on pressing global issues. More than ever, the world has great expectations that the United Nations will meet the rising challenges for peace and development and deliver effective and prompt results.

Last year, in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we all pledged to leave no one behind. This promise supports poverty eradication and development efforts in the most challenging contexts. It means addressing persistent vulnerabilities and building resilience in complex, protracted crises and conflict-affected populations. Therefore, strengthening

the development and security nexus must become our mission.

All people have the right to live in peace and security in their own countries. Conflicts, poverty, disasters and climate change have contributed to the rise of large movements of refugees and migrants. Some 125 million people around the world are in desperate need of humanitarian assistance. The current unprecedented migration crisis cannot be addressed by the most affected countries alone; it is a global phenomenon that requires joint efforts and shared responsibility. The global commitment to shared responsibility shown at the United Nations summit held on Monday goes hand in hand with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Sustainable solutions must be found to ensure opportunities for education, employment and business for persons forcibly displaced during protracted crises and conflicts and to provide support for host communities and countries.

The development of peaceful and inclusive societies, good governance and respect for human rights will also help us to tackle the spread of violent extremism, while military and security measures are necessary to combat Da'esh and similar groups. We need to address the root causes of people's willingness to choose violent extremism.

Latvia is part of the global coalition against Da'esh that has been instrumental in combating the group in Iraq and Syria. We welcome the NATO decision to step up support for the efforts of the coalition to that end. Only unified, coordinated, collective action at the global, regional and national levels will help us succeed in confronting the new, unconventional threats.

Terrorist attacks continue almost daily. Fighting terrorism must remain our priority. The international community needs a plan for building resilience in the communities that for years have suffered under the barbaric rule of Da'esh. The willingness of local populations will also be required if their future is to be shaped by the primacy of the rule of law and human rights, thus countering the factors conducive to radicalization, extremism and terrorism.

We will not be able to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals without sustaining peace and preventing conflict. The need for decisive political action to address and prevent the conflict that causes massive displacement and suffering is more urgent than ever. The international community must find political solutions.

The security challenges in the Middle East are marked by a high degree of complexity, spillover and refugee flows. After five years of civil war, Syria has been destroyed. Attacks against civilians, medical facilities and schools continue. This is unacceptable. The perpetrators of international crimes must be brought to justice. A real nationwide ceasefire and improved humanitarian access are the prerequisite for the resumption of talks. Latvia has provided its contribution to mitigating the consequences of the conflict. However, only credible and inclusive political solutions will return Syria to stability. All members of the International Syria Support Group must put their political weight behind the United Nations-led process.

In Libya, the institutional vacuum has created a breeding ground for terrorist groups such as Da'esh. The unification and cohesion of rival parties in Libya is a key element for the country's long-term stability and its success in the fight against terrorists.

Iran's diligent implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency will contribute to greater stability in the Middle East. In contrast, North Korea's irresponsible actions, including its repeated nuclear tests, undermine the security of all countries in the region and beyond.

We support all recent international efforts aimed at making progress towards the resumption of the Middle East peace process and find common ground that will bring the two parties back to meaningful dialogue. There is no alternative to a two-State solution reached through peace negotiations.

Ensuring long-term stability in Afghanistan is of vital importance for global and regional security. Adverse developments in that country can have spillover effects on the neighbouring countries of Central Asia, which undermines their potential to develop economic connectivity at the macroregional level. Latvia provides Afghanistan with political and financial support for reform in the country. We call on more active regional cooperation, together with continued international support, to sustain the growth and prosperity of Afghanistan and its people.

In many other countries, the political situation is highly volatile, and some are engulfed in conflict.

The United Nations and its peace efforts can help to stabilize these countries and gradually bring them back to normalcy.

We support the United Nations in its aim to make peacekeeping more effective through updating available tools for meeting new challenges. Better planning, equipment and training will improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping and the protection of civilians. There should be greater focus on strengthened collaboration with regional organizations. Building upon experience from other international operations, Latvia is now involved for the first time in a United Nations peacekeeping operation, in Mali.

This is still a very turbulent time for European security. For Latvia, the stability and security of Europe's neighbours in the East is a strategic priority and remains high on our political agenda. The resolution of protracted conflicts in Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno Karabakh should have priority on the international agenda. We must remain vigilant and insist that all States, including Russia, abide by their obligations under international law with regard to respecting the borders of sovereign States.

Together with the international community, Latvia will continue to stand for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. We refuse to recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation; it must end. Any discrimination against the Crimean Tatars and ethnic Ukrainians in Crimea requires a firm reaction from the United Nations. The international community must work to facilitate the peaceful resolution of the conflict in eastern Ukraine. All parties must fulfil their commitments under the Minsk agreements and make the Minsk process work. Latvia continues to support Ukraine in its reforms and with its humanitarian needs.

The United Nations capacity to address current challenges also depends on the political will to make progress on the necessary reform of the Security Council, which is long overdue. We should all be aiming to strengthen the legitimacy of this important body. Accordingly, the permanent members of the Security Council should refrain from using their veto power in situations involving atrocity crimes. Latvia supports not only this important initiative, but also the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency group's code of conduct on Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

We are determined to maintain the political momentum for climate action. In April of this year, Latvia signed the historic Paris Agreement. We will strive to ratify the Agreement as soon as possible and encourage others to do the same. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has been driving the push for worldwide action on climate change and gender equality. Latvia is grateful to him for his leadership and dedication over the past decade.

The scope of challenges that the world faces is daunting. The bold global agenda requires leadership. The expectations placed on the next Secretary-General of the United Nations are therefore as high as ever. This important job requires courage and readiness to effectively tackle the issues that we face. While we are looking for the best-qualified candidate, we also recall that Eastern Europe is the only region that has never held the post of Secretary-General. I am equally convinced that after 70 years, it is time to choose a woman for the Organization's top job.

Ms. Young (Belize), Vice-President, took the Chair.

There are many challenges that shape the evolving global landscape, but we now see the clear outlines of the new and better world that can be reached through diligent implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Implementation of the new Agenda will not be easy. Only through an informed and active society, in true partnership with all stakeholders, and through review of the progress made, will we be able to achieve the necessary transformative change by 2030. This is the time for us to act together responsibly. Latvia will continue to play its part in shaping a better future for us all.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Latvia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Raimonds Vējonis, President of the Republic of Latvia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Adress by Mr. Bakir Izetbegović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Bakir Izetbegović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Bakir Izetbegović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Izetbegović: Peace and security, human rights and development are the pillars of the United Nations — a founding promise to the world that this Organization was created to safeguard. Yet our world today is anything but peaceful and secure; it is marred by injustice, inequality and intolerance, each of which erodes the foundations of human society. We are witnessing human suffering on an unprecedented scale, suffering that reaches far beyond national boundaries and capacities to deal with it. Poverty, hunger, disease, natural disasters and climate change afflict millions of our fellow human beings. Many States and societies are trapped in protracted conflicts, with cycles of violence claiming countless victims.

We are facing the worst forced displacement crisis since the Second World War. Some 60 million people have been forced to flee their homes because of wars, persecution and human-rights violations. They are scattered around the world with their livelihoods and communities shattered to pieces and their nations and cultures torn apart. Robbed of their dignity and living in despair in refugee camps, they are compelled to seek a better future on the borders of other countries. They are not faceless statistics, but human beings with every right to a future free of violence and a future full of hope and opportunity. Their tragedy is our tragedy; their future is our future.

This crisis requires not only a humanitarian response but a sustainable political solution. It requires stronger political leadership and resolve, as well as a rethinking of policy, operational and financing strategies at national, regional and international levels. However, all too often, narrow national interests impede the formulation of such joint responses. When crises, such as the current refugee and migrant crisis in the Middle East and in Europe, transcend borders we must look at the big picture — not merely from the standpoint of national interests — because the consequences of our actions and omissions resonate beyond our borders.

As a country that had hundreds of thousands of its citizens suffer the plight of being forced out of their homes, Bosnia and Herzegovina attaches great significance to addressing this challenge. We recognize the importance and timely organization of the summit for refugees and migrants, and we welcome the adoption of the outcome document (resolution 71/1) that is clearly linked to the 2030 Agenda. We hope that the commitments made by Member States at that meeting will have meaningful impact on the ground. In the 2030 Agenda, we pledged to ensure that no one is left behind and committed to empowering the most vulnerable.

Bosnia and Herzegovina fully supports the 2030 Agenda. As a newly elected member of the Economic and Social Council, we will play an active role in the implementation of this transformative blueprint for change. Our ability to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will depend on the availability of support for national implementation — primarily from the revised and improved Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, which must be a true global platform for the exchange of best practices in the fields of finance, trade, technology and capacity-building among Member States. We support the Global Mechanism and the monitoring of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, which will outline critical milestones towards a coherent and inclusive follow-up and review of the Agenda at the global level.

The 2030 Agenda requires us to achieve transformation not only for the sake of the people but also for the sake of the planet. Our development must not come at the expense of our habitat. Unless we urgently take coordinated global action to reverse existing patterns of environmental degradation and climate change, we risk endangering a desired future for generations to come. Fulfilling the commitments of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change is critical to protecting development outcomes and adapting to the consequences of natural disasters and climate change through risk-informed development. Bosnia and Herzegovina is already implementing its Climate Change Adaptation and Low-Emission Development Strategy, with the aim of becoming a viable and advanced green economy by 2025.

But we need to stay alert. The 2030 Agenda is not the answer to all our problems. There is always room for inequality and injustice to thrive if our approach, acceptance and implementation are not cohesive and

unified. What we make of the 2030 Agenda and how we build upon it will determine its results in improving equal opportunity for all people.

Human rights are at the heart of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, from eradicating poverty to reducing inequality and promoting inclusive societies. As we start to bring people in from the margins, we must strive to put human rights at the centre of our actions, as they are the most powerful driving forces of peace and development. The SDGs are the gold standard we are committed to upholding so that our people can enjoy dignity, freedom and equality. They are a moral and legal framework that empowers people everywhere to fight injustice anywhere.

We are deeply concerned about the erosion of world peace and security caused by new and protracted conflicts, especially in the Middle East. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which has lasted for over 60 years, has been the primary and constant source of instability in the Middle East. A new impetus for negotiations is urgently needed. We strongly support efforts to hold a peace conference that would bring a lasting and just resolution to this conflict, based on the principles of international law and reaching a consensus on the peaceful coexistence of two independent States.

International peace and stability are being dramatically undermined by the violence and crimes against the Syrian people. It is deeply troubling that the most influential global and regional actors have so far failed to find a peaceful solution to the crisis in Syria. Bosnia and Herzegovina fully supports the Geneva peace talks and the efforts of the International Syria Support Group to find a political solution to this conflict. The peaceful future of Syria rests upon respecting the will of the Syrian people and allowing them to express that will in democratic elections.

The so-called Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has severely destabilized Syria, Iraq and the broader Middle East, posing a grave threat to international security. Its ideology, objectives and actions are contrary to all values and norms of our civilization. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the atrocities, systematic abuses of human rights and violations of international law committed by ISIL. As a member of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue to contribute within our means to international efforts to defeat this terrorist organization.

Terrorism is a global threat that affects us all. No State or society is immune to it, and no State alone can counter it. With violent extremism on the rise and a growing number of foreign fighters, terrorism is becoming an increasingly difficult challenge that requires a comprehensive response involving the collaboration of all States, employing both preventative and security measures. We face a problem that has deep and complex roots, that transcends national boundaries, and that cannot, and should not, be associated with any one religion, nationality or ethnic group. Those who perpetrate, organize and inspire terrorist attacks, claiming to do so in the name of Islam, want to turn Islam into an ideology of global fear. Violent extremism and terrorism are unacceptable from the viewpoint of any religion, including Islam. They undermine Islam's system of values and its universal teachings of tolerance and coexistence.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is strongly committed to combating terrorism in all its forms. We are deeply concerned with the rise of violent extremism, and attach a great importance to countering it. We welcome the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism as another useful tool in a comprehensive whole-of-United Nations approach to preventing violent extremism. The prevention of extremism and the promotion of human rights are inextricably linked. Inclusive governance and respect for the rule of law are of paramount importance. Political, economic and social injustices around the world contribute to the rise of despair and hopelessness, creating a fertile ground for the emergence of radicalism and violent extremism.

In the imperfect world in which we live, injustice is constantly growing, but actions that cause further injustice are not the right response. Our Governments must and will respond to violence with forceful and repressive measures. However, if that part of our response is not carried out precisely and selectively, with respect for human rights and the rule of law, it will only cause a new wave of radicalization. The real fight and ultimate victory must and can be reached solely on the ideological level.

Our approach and strategy must be holistic. We must apply a wide range of policies and measures that address the economic and social conditions conducive to the spread of violent extremism that terrorist organizations exploit to drive recruitment and radicalization. In particular, we must work harder to eliminate discrimination, prejudice and xenophobia in

our societies, reduce poverty and inequality, improve education and expand opportunities, especially for our younger generations.

The engagement of the United Nations has never been more critical, as we face unprecedented challenges in confronting the surge in violence in various forms around the world. Global action, guided by the principles of international law, is required to put an end to the violence and instability in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Libya and other crisis areas. Ensuring the protection of civilians and compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law is imperative. Neutrality and indifference lead to resentment and frustration, further emboldening those who leave devastation and sorrow in their wake.

Humanitarian aid can never serve as a substitute for solutions that address the root causes of conflict, nor can it create the necessary conditions for lasting peace and stability. The main causes of modern conflicts are discrimination and exclusion, failures of governance, impunity, deep-rooted poverty and the lack of opportunity, aggravated by the growing effects of climate change. In our increasingly interconnected world, we can no longer keep the impact of faraway conflicts outside our borders, nor can we ignore their global consequences. Our past failures, which came at a very high human cost, should have taught us how to better prevent and end conflicts. The scenes from Syria or the Mediterranean shores are a painful reminder that we have not learned those lessons and are still failing to turn our promises into actions.

We must act upon early-warning signs of potential conflict. It is critically important to develop and strengthen shared frameworks for conflict-risk analysis, including early-warning mechanisms at the local, national, regional and international levels. Bosnia and Herzegovina encourages the better use of Articles 34 and 99 of the Charter of the United Nations by the Security Council in order to place greater emphasis on preventive diplomacy in situations that could give rise to conflict or threaten international peace and security. Early United Nations engagement and use of the Secretary-General's good offices, combined with regional mediation efforts, can also substantially reduce the risk of conflict. We support the United Nations in convening an international conflict-prevention forum by 2020, and we urge the Secretary-General to develop a comprehensive United Nations plan to strengthen conflict prevention.

We recognize the value of introducing United Nations peacebuilding efforts at an early stage, alongside peacekeeping activities. The contemporary peace and security environment demands increasingly complex peacekeeping missions with coherent mandates that effectively correspond to situations on the ground. We are proud to have contributed to the United Nations peacekeeping operations in the Congo and in Mali with our military peacekeepers and with police officers in South Sudan, Liberia, Cyprus and Afghanistan, nearly a quarter of whom were women.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is deeply committed to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, multilateralism and the settling of international disputes and conflicts through peaceful means. Using the advantages of our geopolitical position as a bridge between the East and the West and a meeting point of civilizations, we want to advance dialogue and understanding and forge partnerships with friendly countries around the world. We strongly value and are committed to regional and subregional cooperation and remain active in a number of regional initiatives focusing on peacebuilding, migration, cross-border security and development issues.

At home and abroad, we will continue to uphold and promote good governance, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We will continue advocating the use of all available legal mechanisms to seek and achieve justice for all victims of crimes against humanity, because we believe that truth and justice are prerequisites for achieving lasting reconciliation, peace and security.

In the past year we have seen a renewed sense of unity and unprecedented levels of commitment. We acceded to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Addis Ababa Action Plan on Transformative Financing for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Agenda for Humanity and the historic Paris Agreement on Climate Change. We have collectively committed ourselves to the betterment of humankind with our renewed focus on conflict prevention and resolution and our strengthened efforts towards sustainable development, equal opportunity for all, the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Peace and security cannot be detached from either development or environmental agendas. Peace is not

merely the absence of violence. It is freedom from fear and insecurity. There can be no lasting peace and security when injustice and inequality are an everyday experience for millions of people or when basic rights and freedoms are denied to so many human beings. The resulting grievances make our States unstable and our societies vulnerable and readily fuel extremism, radicalization and violence. Injustice and inequality diminish the human potential of our communities, leaving development and prosperity beyond their reach.

The road towards progress goes from ending poverty to reducing inequality and building just, equitable, tolerant, open and inclusive societies, with respect for human rights and the promotion of the rule of law at the core of our every action. History will judge us by the difference we make in the lives of millions of people who are suffering from marginalization, discrimination, poverty, malnutrition, disease, natural disasters and climate change. We must listen to their voices and respond to their needs, hopes and aspirations. We must find the will and courage to take urgent actions to turn the agendas we agreed upon into instruments of true global change, honouring our pledge to humankind and leaving a legacy true to our values.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Bakir Izetbegović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. José Mário Vaz, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

Mr. José Mário Vaz, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. José Mário Vaz, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Vaz (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): It is a great honour and privilege for me to be addressing the Assembly for the first time since I took office as President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

First allow me to congratulate Mr. Peter Thomson, President of the General Assembly at this session, and to wish him the greatest success in his work. I also thank his predecessor, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft of Denmark, for his excellent work during the previous session. I would also like express our appreciation for the theme chosen for this session, under President Thomson's important sponsorship, which focuses on the issue of sustainable development.

Guinea-Bissau believes that this session is an opportunity to strengthen the commitments made as well as the division of responsibilities among all international actors in pursuit of the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1).

The Addis Ababa Action Agenda (resolution 69/313) for development financing, approved by the General Assembly in July 2015, gave rise to fresh hope with regard to financing for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The commitments made by the parties must be respected. The goals of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda are complementary and must be harmonized and aligned.

My country is strongly committed to doing our part in implementing the commitments made in the context of global and regional strategies. Thus we are proud of the fact that our national development plan is in line with many of the Goals of the Agenda and also of the political will demonstrated by the national authorities to gradually adjust this strategic plan in order to fully accommodate the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Guinea-Bissau has very important natural capital to leverage for our development and for the preservation of the environment in the West Africa ecoregion. Thus biodiversity has become an axis that cuts across all other aspects of my country's development.

Allow me to take this opportunity to briefly share with the Assembly the current political situation and the efforts that have been made to overcome the institutional challenges that our country faces, particularly our political authorities.

Just before I left to attend this session, thanks to the mediation of the Heads of State of Guinea Conakry and Sierra Leone, who were in my country recently, in accordance with a decision reached at the Conference

of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), held in Dakar, an agreement was signed with a view to overcoming the current roadblocks in our Parliament. The agreement was signed by the President of the National Popular Assembly, the Prime Minister and the two main political parties.

The understanding reached deserves the full support of the President of the Republic, ECOWAS and other partners of Guinea-Bissau as an important step toward the easing of political tensions and a consensus platform that will allow us to ensure Government stability until the end of the legislative term.

The endorsement of this understanding by the Heads of State of ECOWAS and the international community, which met yesterday to discuss the way forward to implementing the agreement, rauses the hope that all parties are strongly committed to establishing peace and stability so as to allow the agreement to be implemented.

Therefore, allow me to reiterate my commitment to do all that is required, through a frank and open dialogue with all active forces in our country, in order to consolidate an environment of peace and social stability, which are indispensable to a process of stable governance in our country.

I should note, however, that today the Bissau-Guinean crisis is no longer a political and military crisis, but merely, and eminently, a political and institutional crisis. I should also note that, from the outset of my term, not a single shot has been fired by military or paramilitary personnel; no one has been killed or beaten for political reasons; there have been no reported cases of arbitrary arrest; there is freedom of expression, the press and demonstration; and no issues of human rights violations have been raised.

As Supreme Commander of the armed forces, I would also like to reiterate to the Assembly our request for United Nations support for the process of national reconciliation that is under way in our country; for the participation of our armed forces in international peacekeeping missions; for the implementation of safety and security-sector reform, which is of great importance, namely with respect to the control of weapons and the management of materiel; the construction of armories and the renovation of barracks; and the securing of funds for the reintegration of demobilized troops.

The world today faces a tremendous challenge: combating and overcoming the scourges of terrorism, drug trafficking, climate change and other evils that are ravaging our countries. These threats are clear evidence of the security challenges that we face on our shared planet.

Our subregion, West Africa, is also affected by acts of terrorism, which represent an intolerable manifestation of barbarism and of disdain for the most sacred values of humanity. I wish to take this unique opportunity to once again express my country's solidarity with the countries and peoples that are victims of terrorism and reiterate our commitment to them.

Guinea-Bissau welcomes the signing of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and calls for its implementation as a key tool for regulating international dialogue and cooperation among States, which hold in their hands the fate of the planet.

Climate change poses an emerging risk for Guinea-Bissau. We are a coastal country, with an island portion and a high risk of sea-level rise, which poses a great threat to a significant portion of our territory. Therefore, climate change matters are some of the main priorities of our political action. Accordingly, we have great interest in participating in and closely monitoring the High-level United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 — on conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development — which will take place in New York in 2017. The President of the General Assembly is therefore in the right place to fulfil the mission the Assembly has assigned to him in this regard.

In the past year, we have observed an important development in the international context, namely, the rapprochement between the United States and Cuba, which we greatly welcomed. We hope that the normalization of bilateral relations may bring these two friends of Guinea-Bissau closer together. In addition, we call for the implementation of the resolutions calling for a two-State solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly acknowledge Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission for their continued focus on, solidarity with, and ongoing monitoring of Guinea-Bissau, its people and its authorities, even in an environment of multiple and

complex challenges. In addition, on behalf of the people of Guinea-Bissau, I would also like to recognize and thank the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), its Commission and its member States for their political, financial and military support in the process of stabilizing, securing and reforming the safety and security sectors.

I would like to offer a word of appreciation to Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, Chair of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, and special thanks to President Alpha Condé of Guinea for his role in facilitating the dialogue in the political process in Guinea-Bissau. We also offer our profound gratitude to Mr. Muhammadu Buhari, President of Nigeria, for his unwavering support as head of the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau. I further convey our gratitude to all heads of State in the subregion, who have given a high level of attention to Guinea-Bissau during the years our political crisis persisted.

Our recognition of and gratitude to all other international partners, countries and organizations, namely, the African Union, the West African Economic and Monetary Union, the European Union, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Population Fund and the International Organization of la Francophonie, which have always stood with Guinea-Bissau and supported our country in its pursuit of paths leading to stability and development. The support of our international partners, as seen in the results of the Brussels round table in 2015, unequivocally translates into attention to the situation of the State and the people of Guinea-Bissau. As promised, we count on our partners' help to leverage economic development as the engine for peace and stability in our country.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our appreciation for the United Nations and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, which kept their attention on and unflaggingly monitored Guinea-Bissau, our people and our institutions despite the multiple and complex problems that the world is facing. It is with great satisfaction that I highlight the indispensable role of the United Nations, through its representative in Guinea-Bissau, Mr. Modibo Touré, whom I thank for his personal dedication to facilitating dialogue and seeking solutions, as well as the strengthened consolidation of the democratic rule of law in Guinea-Bissau.

Finally, I wish the President of the Assembly continued success as he conducts the work of this seventy-first session of the General Assembly on behalf of the States and peoples of the world. May God bless us all.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau for the statement he has just made.

Mr. José Mário Vaz, President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Miloš Zeman, President of the Czech Republic

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Czech Republic.

Mr. Miloš Zeman, President of the Czech Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Miloš Zeman, President of the Czech Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Zeman: One year ago, here in this Hall, I warned the international community of the threat posed by the spread of international terrorism (see A/70/PV.17). What has happened in the year since then? Paris, Brussels, Dhaka, Istanbul, Orlando, Munich, Nice and New York, again, is what happened.

A few years ago, the number of countries that were influenced by Islamic terrorism was only six. Now, it is 35. The Islamic State is something like a cancer. But it is not only a tumor. Many cancers have metastases, which are more dangerous than the original tumor itself, and this is what we are observing in the spread of radicalism, terrorism and fanaticism. We must now ask, how long are we to wait before we act? How long are we going to be limited to conveying only condolences? How long will we be constrained to make only declarations of solidarity?

I admit that there are some limited actions can be taken against terrorism, but they are, in fact, very

limited, while terrorism is spreading all the time. There are three main risks in this area. The first is that, in the near future, there will be a new Islamic State in Afghanistan. If there is a reduction of NATO forces in Afghanistan, a victory by the Taliban is highly probable. If that were to happen, we can expect to see the same level of cruelty from the Taliban as that which we have seen from Al-Qaida, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Boko Haram and the Al-Nusra Front and others.

The second risk is the extremization or radicalization of the population, which is still quite unstable. Let me cite one unpleasant example. In the 1930s, in Germany, the population was also quite unstable despite the fact that it was a very cultivated population. After all, Germany is the nation of Goethe and Schiller. Over the course of a few years, this very decent nation became one of fanatical Nazis. It only took a few years. We must admit that such radicalization or extremization is also possible today.

The third risk stems from our hesitation and our lack of courage in carrying out decisive actions. My country, though small, has troops in Afghanistan, Mali and other parts of the world. That, however, is not enough. What we need is the coordinated action of most if not all States Members of the United Nations. But what can be done until that happens? Let me cite another example.

What we need is a solid, firm, comprehensive United Nations platform on international terrorism. A proposal for such a platform was put forward by India in the year 2000 — 16 years ago. Sixteen years later, we are still discussing how international terrorism should be defined. International lawyers have literally been discussing this issue for 16 years.

Thank God I am not an international lawyer. I say that because, for me, a terrorist is anybody who intentionally kills innocent civilian people. It is that simple: "Elementary, my dear Watson", as they say. Unfortunately, the United Nations has been discussing a programme — and the definition of international terrorism — for 16 years. As a result, I have some doubts about the efficiency of this international Organization. I hope the Acting President will excuse me for being so blunt. Obviously, this state of affairs is not satisfactory; we do not have the platform we need.

Last year, I proposed the creation of an international force, equipped with drones, helicopters and air rangers and using improved communication among national secret services. I was very happy to learn that the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, our French colleague, proposed the same thing: using the experience with drones and helicopters in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to wage the fight against jihadists. What we need is not massive territorial operations — those have led to bad experiences in Iraq, Syria and Libya, where we were able to destroy, but we were not able to build; rather, we must attack the most sensitive points, the nerve centres of international terrorism, without occupying territory. We must attack the brain, not the body.

I had hoped that there would be a Security Council resolution on combating terrorism, but again that did not happen. I read the first draft of such a resolution proposed by the Russian Federation, but that proposed draft resolution has not yet been adopted. Unfortunately, many of the Articles of the Charter of the United Nations, beginning with Article 39 and ending with Article 51, go unused. For example, Article 47, on the Military Staff Committee, is, in United Nations terminology, a "sleeping Article" or a "sleeping structure". Let us therefore awaken it. Since we have those Articles and we have this Charter, we need to use them when the appropriate opportunity arises. For without those measures, without coordinated military action based on the common will of the permanent members of the Security Council, the spread of terrorism will continue, and we shall be faced with new assassinations, new failed countries and new terrorist actions throughout the world.

Let me conclude with the old Roman oratorical phrase uttered frequently by Cato the Elder: "*Ceterum autem censeo Carthaginem esse delendam*" — "Moreover, I believe that Carthage must be destroyed". Deep in my heart I believe that someday we will overcome — not Carthage, but international terrorism.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Czech Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Miloš Zeman, President of the Czech Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Morales Ayma (*spoke in Spanish*): I am once again participating in the regular session of the General Assembly to reaffirm our respect, admiration and congratulations to our brother, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for his contribution to the life of the peoples of the world and of Mother Earth. We appreciate and express our deep respect for his work as Secretary-General of the United Nations. I am also here to reiterate that we are living in a time of renewed global obscurantism, spurred by the capitalist and imperialist barbarism that is killing human dignity, the integrity of our common home, Mother Earth, and the sovereignty of our countries.

Mr. Sogavare (Solomon Islands), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Today, according to United Nations data, some 94 per cent of the world's wealth is in the hands of a mere 20 per cent of the global population. More than 800 million people in the world are suffering from hunger. This grim social reality is the true face of capitalism. Humankind's main goals during this century should be to eradicate capitalism and imperialism as the prevailing societal model. If we do not build another model of society as soon as possible, the Sustainable Development Goals will be replaced with the sustainable goals of death for all living things and Mother Earth.

This year has been the hottest in the history of the planet, and each year is hotter than the previous one. This year, Bolivia is also experiencing one of the worst droughts in history. We have to be alert and take immediate action to prevent the barbarism of capitalism from transforming the Paris Agreement into an agreement of lies and blackmail.

The capitalist countries have built borders and walls everywhere — on water, on land and in the air. One out of every 100 people in the world is either a refugee or someone displaced by global warming, wars or imperialist invasions, as occurred in Syria, Iraq, Libya and other countries. We hope that all of the world's peoples can start building universal citizenship and one great country where people live in harmony and as part of a common family.

The expansionist and warmongering policies of the State of Israel and its allies are major expressions of barbarism in the modern world. We strongly condemn Israel's attacks on the civilian population of Palestine and demand that Israel cease hostilities immediately. We urge the United Nations to fully and immediately recognize the State of Palestine and take tangible action to stop the brutal genocide of the Palestinian people.

We return to the General Assembly to express our strong rejection of the coercive and unilateral economic measures imposed by the United States against Cuba for political reasons. It is not sufficient to restore diplomatic relations. The United States must compensate Cuba for the economic blockade and restore Guantanamo to Cuban territorial sovereignty.

We commend the signing of the peace agreement between the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. It shows that we are fulfilling the promise of membership in the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States — to make our region a zone of peace. We must never forget that peace can be achieved only with social justice. We highlight and admire Cuba's leadership in facilitating the peace agreement.

We lament the fact that other Governments, such as that of the United States, perpetrate attacks, such as the most recent bombing of military positions in Syria, which left dozens of soldiers dead or wounded. It shows the hypocrisy and the ongoing non-compliance with the commitments they undertook in the Syrian ceasefire agreement, announced by Russia and the United States on 9 September in Geneva.

We condemn terrorism, violence and war, but in order to eliminate terrorism, we must attack the root causes of this scourge for humankind. It must be said that as long as wealth remains in the hands of a few, as long as poverty and exclusion exist, as long as racism and discrimination persist, as long as the identity and the sovereignty of peoples are not respected and their

natural resources are pillaged for imperialist purposes, there will be grounds for violence and terrorism. We must build a world of peace and equality with dignity and brotherhood among peoples.

Many brother countries have been affected by the global economic crisis. In Bolivia, however, we have developed policies and are taking measures to deal with the repercussions of the global crisis in the capitalist system. Bolivia is leading economic growth in South America, as it is one of the countries that has achieved complementarity among economic growth, distribution of wealth, public investment and a significant reduction in poverty while expanding equality. None of this would have been possible without the sovereign measures it has taken, such as the nationalization of our natural resources and strategic companies.

Imperialist interests are creating a process of political destabilization in our region. We condemn foreign political intervention in our brother country of Venezuela. We salute the revolutionary fight of the people, undertaken with their leader, Commander Maduro. The new imperial conspiracy in the twenty-first century is no longer through coups d'etat but rather through parliamentary or judicial takeovers. They may be legal and constitutional, but they are not legitimate, nor do they respect the decisions of the people.

We express our deep concern about and rejection of the actions taken by the Secretary General of the Organization of American States (OAS), which are in breach of the basic principles of the United Nations. The Organization of American States needs to be a true representation of the all the countries of the Americas, and not an agent or mouthpiece for the interests of the United States. We do not need an imperial leader to control our people. If the OAS does not represent or respect, the sovereignty of its member States, it would be better if it did not exist at all.

Last week, on 18 September, the Heads of State and Government of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement met on Margarita Island, Venezuela, and strongly condemned action taken by the United States of America relative to its Transnational Drug Trafficking Act of 2015, which involves implementing extraterritorial measures that violate the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. I take this opportunity to inform members of the Assembly that Bolivia, without military bases or the presence of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), is now faring better in the fight against drug trafficking, and this fact has been recognized by the United Nations.

I also note that thanks to a few police officers of our armed forces, we learned the following: when the DEA was in Bolivia, when it seized drugs, 50 per cent were burned and 50 per cent went to DEA for trade. A Bolivian officer inquired about the latter 50 per cent, and the response was that the DEA used the money to pay off our police. Investigations that were conducted proved that the DEA was training police and military personnel to plan the assassination of leaders. For these reasons and many more, I would like to tell those present in this Hall today that terrorism and drug trafficking are twins that serve the imperial interests of the United States, which seeks to invade and control other countries around the world — I am completely convinced of this.

Furthermore, I recall that in 1879, the Bolivian coast was invaded by Chilean and English transnational military forces with a view to taking the substantial natural resources there by force. For more than a century, Chile has expressly and repeatedly rejected the pressing need for Bolivia to once again be a coastal country, and it has undertaken to negotiate with Bolivia the restitution of maritime access.

Bolivia has relied in good faith on all the legal commitments undertaken, which served as the basis of our claim brought before the International Court of Justice. The Court declared its jurisdiction over the matter on 24 September 2015, after the Government of Chile presented an objection regarding said jurisdiction. We understand that these are times of dialogue, that we must work together on solutions that will allow us to resolve pending matters peacefully and with the full involvement of the people. We invite Chile to put an end to one of the longest-lasting conflicts in the history of Latin America, whose solution continues to be an outstanding debt between our nations. The solution to the conflict will benefit not only Bolivia but Chile and the integration of Latin America as a whole. We are certain that we will find a solution whereby everyone is a winner.

I would like to thank the organizations of the international community and the various presidents, former presidents and peoples of the world for their ongoing support for Bolivia to regain sovereign access to the sea. I would also like to highlight the fact that

the United Nations created an institution of such importance, the International Court of Justice, so that international conflicts and controversies could be resolved peacefully. We trust that the Court will serve justice.

Our greatest wish is to see the message of Pope Francis become reality — to establish channels of dialogue and tear down the walls that divide us. We want to launch a dialogue that satisfies the mutual interests of our countries. In Bolivia, we are building a country that will be an exemplar of equality, liberty with dignity, and sovereignty for the world. For these reasons, we insist and will continue to insist that all basic services must be recognized as human rights, and that, further, we recognize and respect the rights of Mother Earth. The new world order with social justice must be built on the foundation of fraternity among nations and harmony with Mother Earth for the well-being of all of us.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Evo Morales Ayma, Constitutional President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique

The Acting President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Mozambique.

Mr. Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Nyusi (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): It is a great honour for me to address, on behalf of the people of Mozambique, the General Assembly, the world's highest forum for political and diplomatic discussion, at its seventy-first session.

I would first like to congratulate the President on his election to lead the Assembly at this session and to thank the outgoing President, Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, for the dedication with which he has fulfilled his mandate in the context of achieving fundamental commitments, namely, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. As we celebrate the first anniversary of the adoption of these important instruments, we are pleased to see that the world and the United Nations system have been making progress with their implementation. Despite those developments, however, we are cognizant of the challenges that remain.

The theme for this session of the Assembly — "The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world" — could not be more appropriate, as the year 2016 has ushered in a new era for implementing the global development agenda. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reflects the collective ambition for and global consensus on the importance of accelerating the creation of the conditions for ensuring that our efforts to eradicate poverty and build sustainable development are people-centred. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) therefore represent a tool with enormous potential for triggering profound changes in our vision for development and ensuring that no country or individual is left behind.

The major challenge to the Sustainable Development Goals lies in their implementation, particularly with regard to their alignment with global, regional and national instruments and resources, their financing, monitoring and evaluation of progress, and their inclusiveness. By integrating the dimension of peace and stability, the Sustainable Development Goals acknowledge the inseparability of peace and development and the need for each to be strengthened. Only in this way can we build peaceful, just and inclusive societies, for which genuine political will is required. For this process to succeed, we urgently need to reposition the United Nations system so that it can respond to current realities.

There can be no doubt that the global transformation that the SDGs are aiming to achieve will require structural changes in the way we design and implement our major national development agendas in the short, medium and long term. In that regard, Mozambique's 2015-2019 five-year Government programme, our

blueprint for governance, already reflects some of the principles and the three dimensions of sustainable development.

In order to mainstream, monitor and report on our implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, we recently established a national reference group comprising representatives from the Government, Parliament, civil society, the private sector and cooperating partners. The group's task is to follow up on progress on the indicators selected to assess targets up to 2030, as well as to deal with policy measures, funding possibilities and any factor that may have an effect on the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Through the group's broad-based intervention, our goal is to make the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals more inclusive, consistent and transparent, and something which all the various stakeholders can feel part of.

The third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa in July 2015, recommended that countries use their own frameworks and means to respond to the new development agenda. The Conference advised Member States to develop comprehensive and integrated funding strategies that go beyond traditional procedures for public budgeting. In that context, and as part of our commitment to continuing to mobilize more resources, Mozambique has established a national fund for sustainable development. In addition, we have begun evaluating the flow of development financing, with the aim, on the one hand, of facilitating a system for viewing the development results for each of the country's available financial flows, and, on the other hand, of exploring options for the coherent integration of Government priorities with those of the international agenda.

To complement the foregoing efforts, we continue to urge the revitalization of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development and support for the relevance of the principle of shared but differentiated responsibility. We also advocate for the importance of ensuring that partners honour their commitments undertaken within the framework of the internationally agreed development goals and of the predictability of development aid, based on the provisions of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. With the help of those tools we will be able to establish sound institutional foundations for the efficient and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, helping to fulfil the "universal push to transform our world".

Making our global agenda a reality requires a collective commitment on the part of all of us to strengthening multilateral institutions. To that end, we continue to believe firmly in the importance of reforming the United Nations as a whole and the Security Council in particular, as well as changing the architecture of international financial institutions on the basis of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and improving cooperation between the United Nations and regional economic organizations, particularly where the prevention and resolution of conflicts are concerned.

As we meet today in this Hall, we reaffirm our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, a universal Organization with a mandate to maintain international peace and security and to defend human rights. We recognize the United Nations as an essential platform for political and diplomatic discussion and international cooperation on peace and development. In that regard, we would like to express our appreciation for the excellent and successful job that Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has done in completing his mandate to lead the Organization for two terms. We hope that under its soon-to-be-elected incoming Secretary-General, the United Nations will strengthen its relations with Mozambique, particularly in terms of helping us to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. We also look forward to seeing the implementation of reforms that will make our Organization more democratic, more representative and better able to serve all nations and peoples of the world.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate our commitment to continuing our exemplary cooperation with the United Nations and all its Member States in order to achieve our noble objectives, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals, and to build a prosperous, peaceful world for the benefit of all its peoples.

The Acting President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Mozambique for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique, was escorted from the rostrum.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.